

Bangladesh committed to achieving SDG 14

Says Momen at UN conference

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to achieving all targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.

SDG 14 is for conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

"To eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the government of Bangladesh declared an area totaling about 8.8 percent of its exclusive economic zone as marine protected areas, and implemented this in its National Plan of Action in 2019," he said.

The minister made the remarks while delivering the country's statement at the plenary session of the second UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon on Thursday.

Foreign ministry's maritime affairs unit secretary Rear Admiral (retd) Md Khurshed Alam, Bangladesh Ambassador to Portugal Tarik Ahsan and other officials were delegation members accompanying the foreign minister at the conference.

During his statement, Momen said Bangladesh settled maritime boundary issues with both its neighbours and is poised to collaboratively utilise the resources.

Bangladesh also announced new actions aimed at ensuring safe ship recycling by 2023 and is the first amongst developing countries to take initiative to ban manufacture of single use plastic shopping bags, he added.

Momen arrived in Lisbon on Thursday on a two-day visit to Portugal to lead the Bangladesh delegation.

Flood takes 3 more lives
Death toll pushed up to 95

UNB, Dhaka

Flood claimed three more lives across the country in 24 hours till Friday morning, raising the total fatalities to 95.

The latest deaths were recorded in Mymensingh, Netrakona and Sunamganj.

Of the deceased, two drowned, while another died from a lightning strike, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the total deceased, 68 people died by drowning in floodwater, 15 from lightning strikes, two from snake bites, one from diarrhoea, and nine due to other reasons.

The total deaths were recorded from May 17 to June 30.

Meanwhile, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre of Bangladesh Water Development Board said all major rivers in the north-eastern region of the country are in a falling trend, and this may continue in the next 24 hours.

However, Brahmaputra river is in a steady-state, while Jamuna and Padma are showing a rising trend. These rivers may rise in the next 24-48 hours.

The flood situation in Kurigram, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Netrakona, Kishoreganj and Brahmanbaria may improve in the next 24 hours, said the centre's latest report.

High hope, grim reality

Girls' enrolment keeps dropping at colleges, universities

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Women's education in Bangladesh has been a success story so far. Girls have continued to outnumber boys at primary and secondary levels, accounting for more than half of school enrolment.

However, the situation does not remain the same once it's time for college and university. According to the latest government data, girls' enrolment starts falling at the college level and the curve keeps dropping for higher education.

The data – prepared by Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) – suggest that 55.41 percent of girls were studying at the junior school level, from sixth to eighth grade, in 2020, while their participation at master's level was 40.78 percent.

Girls accounted for 53.57 percent of total enrolment at the secondary level, ninth and 10th grade, while the share was 43.80 percent at the graduation level.

The scenario was almost the same in 2018 and 2019.

There is a silver lining in the grim statistics as well. Women's participation at the master's level has increased in three years until 2020. In 2019, some 36.70 percent of female students attended master's level courses, showed the BANBEIS data.

Speaking on this declining trend, educationists said poverty and child marriage are major reasons for the drop. Sexual harassment on the way to college and university also plays a vital role.

Besides, the absence of girls' hostels also serves as a setback in the way of girls' education, they said, alongside the lack of safe transportation.

"Usually, primary schools are located near students' homes. The distance between home and educational institutions keeps increasing with higher levels of education. A girl needs safe transportation to go to colleges and universities," said educationist Rasheda K Choudhury.

"We all know what kind of miserable

condition a girl has to be in while commuting via buses," she told this correspondent.

Rasheda, also executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (Campe), said that residential facilities can solve the problem to a great extent.

Barring a few, most secondary schools and colleges, and private universities have no residential facilities. Some of the government colleges [that offer honours courses] and public universities have dormitories, but those are inadequate, she added.

Maleka Banu, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said child

According to the latest government data, girls' enrolment starts falling at the college level and the curve keeps dropping for higher education.

REASONS

- » Poverty
- » Early marriage
- » Sexual harassment
- » Safe transportation
- » Inadequate dormitories

marriage and guardians' indifference toward investing for their daughters are two reasons behind lower enrolment at the tertiary level.

According to Unicef, 51 percent of young women in Bangladesh were married before their 18th birthday. Bangladesh

GIRLS' ENROLMENT (IN PERCENTAGE)

Grade	2018	2019	2020
6 to 8	55.14	54.91	55.41
9 to 10	51.65	51.68	53.57
College	46.97	46.96	48.85
Degree	41.39	43.23	43.80
Masters	36.07	36.70	40.78

SOURCE: BANBEIS

ranks among the top 10 countries in the world with the highest number of child marriages.

"Child brides are somewhat more likely to reside in rural areas and live in poorer households, and are less likely to have more than secondary education. Married girls are over four times more likely to be out of school than unmarried girls," said Unicef in an October 2020 factsheet.

Experts said the Covid-19-induced long closure of educational institutions has worsened the situation.

Maleka said dormitories for girls at educational institutions are badly needed.

According to data of University Grants Commission, only 37.50 percent of 1,12,779 female students enrolled at 43 public universities have dormitory facilities.

Jagannath University has no dormitories for 6,583 girl students. Around 14 percent of female students could avail dormitory facilities at Barishal University, and 30 percent could get accommodation at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). Girls' colleges suffer from a serious shortage of dormitory seats.

Eden Mahila College Principal Supriya Bhattacharya said there are 22,000 students at her college and six dormitories in total, which can accommodate only 6,000 students.

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22 hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 22 dengue patients have been admitted to different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

With the new cases, three from outside Dhaka, the total number of dengue cases has risen to 1,111, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the patients, nine of whom are from outside Dhaka, 118 are still undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

A total of 992 patients have been released from hospitals and one has died so far.

Warning city corporations, experts suggested the corporations take extensive measures immediately to control Aedes mosquitoes.

Dhaka is at risk of a major outbreak this year, as clear, stagnant water, the breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes, at under-construction buildings is abundant this time around.



With Eid-ul-Azha just around the corner, hundreds of people were seen gathered in close proximity at Golakandail Cattle Market yesterday. According to government instructions, Covid precautions were blasting through the mikes, but hardly any attendant paid attention to the warnings. This photo was taken in Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Three more Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three more Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims have died in Saudi Arabia.

They have been identified as Rafiqul Islam (47), Fatema Begum (60) and Abdul Gafur Miah (62).

Rafiqul and Fatema passed away on Thursday, while Abdul Gafur passed away on Tuesday, according to the hajj management portal of the religious affairs ministry. The causes of their death are yet to be known. A total of nine Bangladeshi pilgrims died so far in Saudi Arabia. Of them, six were men and three women.

UN, Bangladesh maintain strong relationship
Says UN's Yoka Brandt

UNB, Dhaka

Executive Board President of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Yoka Brandt has said the UN has a "strong relationship" with the government of Bangladesh and wants to further build on that to facilitate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

"We are here to see how we can work together more efficiently to that end, especially as the country is poised for LDC graduation," said Brandt, also permanent representative of the Netherlands to the UN.

A high-level delegation of the executive board of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and UNOPS (United Nations Office for

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 2

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
Jamaat	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Deprived of nutrition and healthcare

Garment workers talk about struggles at conference on their plight amid inflation, price hike of essentials

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Garment workers are fighting a desperate battle to keep up with price hikes and inflation. Price of every essential is skyrocketing, but the workers' wages have not increased a penny, said speakers at a conference.

Although Bangladesh's per monthly capita income is Tk 21,000, and it is increasing every year, RMG workers are not getting any benefit from this, they said.

They mentioned that the workers' nutritional balance, access to quality healthcare, ability to purchase daily essentials and overall living standard is decreasing day by day.

Considering the current economic condition, the government must fix the national minimum wage for the workers, and it must not be less than

We can only afford small fries and cheap vegetables for our lunch and dinner.

Our daily meal is a curry in which we mix small fish and vegetables together to save oil, salt and spices, which are very expensive nowadays.

Afsana, garment worker

Tk 25,000 per month.

Speakers made these remarks at the conference titled "Questions on price hike, life of workers and their wages", organised by Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Garment workers, labour leaders, researchers and economists spoke

at the event and presented how the workers are struggling to survive amid economic crisis.

Salima, an RMG worker, said, "My husband and I work at a garment factory in Savar and live near the factory. Earlier, we used to buy rui fish or chicken twice or thrice a month. We couldn't buy them for the last two months."

"We can only afford some low-priced vegetables and small fish. Earlier, we used to buy chocolates and biscuits for our only daughter every weekend. We had to stop buying these items completely to save money for essentials," she said.

Afsana, another garment worker, said, "We can only afford small fries and cheap vegetables for our lunch and dinner. Our daily meal is a curry in which we mix small fish and

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A boatman sleeps peacefully under the shade of a tree on the bank of Buriganga river in Kamrangirchar. When there aren't too many customers who need to get across, he detaches the roof of his boat and gets some needed rest. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN